

SOCIAL ACTION

NOVEMBER 1951

CODIFYING CUSTOMS

A BOMBAY WELFARE CENTRE

ANALYSING THE PLAN

ONE OF THE CATHOLIC INTERNATIONALS

THE RHESUS DANGER

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ORDER

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SOCIAL ACTION

VOL. 1 No. 8

NOVEMBER 1951

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Here and There

Ahead with Planning

The First Five-Year Plan is taken in hand. A Ministry of Planning is established at the Centre and States A, B, and C have received orders to make provision for the first instalment of the Plan. It will be instructive to study their list of priorities. The Report on the Plan gave agriculture and raw materials top-priority. It is not certain that all States will follow the same order. Some recent symptoms are disquieting. In the armed forces of the Republic, unarmed forces which opposed prohibition with successful stolidity are already at work to popularise birth-control. A few municipalities which are hardly progressive have voted money to build birth-control clinics; the Indian Rationalist Association is pursuing its campaign; and Margaret Sanger is announced for an all-India tour next year. India will be swamped with the nefarious propaganda, and if the recommendations of the Planning Commission are voted, she will give it the glamour of official patronage, a deplorable distinction she will share with occupied Japan and Puerto-Rico.

Conscientious Objections

The problem is not only economic but moral, and the offensive will be best thwarted with spiritual forces. Young wives and mothers will be subject to unseemly pressure; doctors, matrons and nurses with conscientious objections will find themselves in embarrassing situations even more than managers and assistants in drug-stores. The time has come for them to make a firm stand which on occasion may demand heroism. The hope lies with our womenfolk whom birth-control tends to turn into mere instruments of pleasure. May their indignation save the country!

Sapping Youth's Morals

The Report of the Planning Commission contains a glaring inconsistency. Pages 206 and 207 advocate the dissemination of contraceptive theory and practice with research laboratories, *swadeshi* appliances and popular propaganda, whilst the last para on p. 234 favours a movement "for upholding the highest family traditions, securing recognition of equally high standards of morality for men and women, for raising the character and conduct in sexual relations and for exploring and removing the causes which create moral dangers for the young". The incoherence between both passages is forsooth more than a terminological inconsistency. How could the planners expect an improvement in sexual behaviour, particularly among the youth, when they propose popularizing immoral practices? If they want to remove one of the causes which create moral dangers for the young, they might with advantage strike off pp. 206 and 207 of their Report.

Parliamentary Labours

The Central Parliament had a wearisome session. The agenda was heavy, the discussion endless and the weather inclement. Much time was given to the Hindu Code Bill; four clauses were voted, the chapters relating to inheritance and property were left over for consideration in the distant

future, finally the Bill was not passed and the Law Minister resigned. Dr. Ambedkar, who prepared and piloted the Bill with the earnestness given to a life-work, failed to reach modern Manu-hood. It is doubtful if the reform of Hinduism which some Hindus may desire can be best obtained by the fiat of the secular parliament of a secular democracy. Would not Cultural Boards be helpful to study, and guide reforms ?

Once the discussion on the Code had died down in general lassitude, the Parliament put on a spurt and passed as many as five bills in one day. They then relapsed into repetitious argumentation on the Press Bill which hands over to the judiciary powers which were formerly entrusted to the executive and which duplicates for publishing corporate bodies the provisions of the Penal Code against individuals.

The last meetings were devoted to the Industries (Control and development) Bill which provides for the control rather than the development of business, to the Report of the Planning Commission which outlines a planning of public expenditure rather than a list of economic objectives, and finally to the delimitation of electoral constituencies.

A few stalwarts of democracy stayed till the end, and the electorate would desire to see the daily attendance at the session published for their information and guidance at election time.

At long last the House closed its doors. What was left of the members dispersed to recuperate in the strenuous exhilaration of the electoral jousts.

A. L.



Rev. J. D'Souza, S.J., M.P., Director of the Indian Institute of Social Order, has been appointed Member of the Indian Delegation to the General Assembly of the U.N.O. which is to open in Paris on November 6. His absence is expected to last three months.

The Hindu Code Bill before Parliament

The very strenuous two months' session of Parliament which ended on the 16th October will be remembered for the large number of important Bills that were piloted through the House with skill and rapidity by Government spokesmen, Bills which were a necessary conclusion to longstanding projects of legislation, and Bills which were a necessary prologue to the drama of the General Elections. Among the former was the important and bitterly contested Press Bill introduced by the Home Minister Mr. Rajagopalachariar and passed by the House on the 6th October. Among the latter, the most important were the Peoples' Representation Bill and the Government of Part "C" States Bill. But paradoxically the session will be best remembered for a Bill which it did not pass—namely the Hindu Code Bill. Readers of *Social Action* will no doubt be glad to have a few comments on this important Bill both because of its bearing on social reform and because of the effect of some of its clauses on the Christian Community in India.

The Background

One of the wisest decisions made by the British when they established their political power in India was to allow the different communities in the land to be governed in civil matters by their own recognised customs and traditions. Only in regard to crime, a uniform Penal Code was imposed on the country. But in regard to marriage and divorce, succession and adoption, the personal law of Muslims and Hindus was recognized and applied with impartiality. The basis of Hindu Law is the Code of Manu. But in addition to the relatively few and simple prescriptions to be found in Manu there had grown up in the Hindu Community in the course of the centuries, a very great diversity of customs

and usages, varying according to Castes and communities and geographical areas. Most of these floating traditions have already been studied and applied in individual cases by Judges in the course of a century and half. Hence at present, the most important part of Hindu law consists of decisions of the High Courts of India.

The need of putting all these decisions together and forming them into a consistent and cohesive corpus has been felt for a long time. Several years ago the Rau Commission toured the country, gathered evidence and prepared the ground work for such a Code. It fell to the lot of Dr. Ambedkar who became Law Minister in the first Parliament of Independent India to complete this preliminary work and present the draft of the Code to Parliament. After the first reading about two years ago, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee. After considerable delay it was taken up for second reading during the Budget session in February this year. But the opening clauses of the Bill dealing with definitions and the application of the Code provoked so much controversy that even after two days' discussion not a single clause was passed. So the measure was dropped for the time being, and other more urgent items of legislation were taken up. During the present session it was hoped that at least the parts dealing with Marriage and Divorce numbering 51 Clauses out of a total of 139 Clauses and 8 Schedules would be passed in the course of ten days at the most. But six days' continual discussion did not take the House beyond the fourth clause. Government realised that it was impossible to pass even the part on Marriage and Divorce if full opportunity for discussion was given to all sections of the House. There never had been any question of refusing opportunities for such discussion. In fact the Congress Party had wisely decided that in this matter wherein conscientious considerations could easily enter the usual measures of party discipline would not be strictly enforced. Hence there was no option for the Government but to admit that the time required for the full discussion of

these clauses was not available, and to decide to adjourn consideration of the Bill to an indefinite future.

Why Such Opposition

To understand both the opposition to the Bill from many sections and the divergence of opinion on details even among those who were broadly in favour of the Code, it is necessary to cast a glance at the contents of the Code from the point of view the innovations which it contained. There are, first of all, clauses which are admittedly in harmony with Hindu tradition and have been accepted as binding in repeated judgments of the High Courts. These clauses do not involve any difficulty and are not the subject of contention. There are also clauses which are based upon progressive legislation embodying important points of social reform which Hindu society as a whole has accepted. Thus for instance there is no great divergence of opinion regarding the Age of Consent as provided for by the Sarda Act, or the provision for the remarriage of widows. But in addition to these there are customs regarding prohibited degrees of marriage, usages regarding the marriage ceremony itself, methods and grounds for divorce among the castes which permit it, methods of adoption and succession, in which great variety prevails in different parts of the country. The Code is an attempt to introduce a measure of uniformity in these matters and naturally there is the keenest divergence of views and room for discussion in regard to them, even among those who want the Code. Finally there are the points in which the Code introduces innovations and thus becomes by itself an important attempt at social legislation. These last points may be briefly summed up here. There is first of all the provision for divorce among the higher castes which up to now did not permit divorce. There is the abolition of polygamy.

There is the restricting of the degrees of relationship within which marriage is prohibited and the recognition of a marriage outside the caste as a Dharmic marriage.

The same opposition to caste is revealed in the liberty given to childless parents to adopt children from outside the caste. Finally there is the provision for women to inherit ancestral property though not to the same extent as the men. These are the salient points in which the Code breaks new ground, though even here, in regard to some of them, monogamy for instance, certain States have already passed laws more advanced than the provisions of the Code.

It will be easily understood that the opposition to the Code comes chiefly from the Orthodox sections which are disturbed by the innovations we have indicated. They see in the Code, and particularly in some of the provisions concerning Marriage, Divorce, Adoption and Succession to property, an attempt to break up the traditional structure of Hindu Society. The fact that Dr. Ambedkar, a man of Scheduled Caste Origin, an avowed Buddhist and declared opponent of the Hindu system, is the protagonist of the Code confirms them in the feeling that this is a veiled attempt to destroy Hinduism. They deny the right of a secular State to legislate on religious matters and to define for example, what is and what is not a Dharmic marriage. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the ablest spokesman for the Opposition, declared that the glory of Hinduism was its adaptability and that all truly progressive ideas would be assimilated by Hindu society without their being forced on them by Government legislation. He admitted that monogamy was a good ideal but that if it was good for Hindus it was good for other communities also, Muslims for example. He asked Government, if they were determined to pass it, to leave it to the option of Hindus to be governed by it or not be governed by it. Pandit Govind Malaviya, Vice-Chancellor of the Benares University, was another staunch opponent who pleaded for option in the application of the Code. He asserted that if there were elections to Parliament on this issue of the Hindu Code, Government would suffer complete defeat.

Another ground of opposition to the Bill came from

those who believed that it was wrong to include Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs among the Hindus and apply the Code to them also. Sardar Bupendher Singh Mann declared on behalf of the Sikhs that they were not consulted about their inclusion. As regards marriage and divorce, he declared that the Sikhs were more advanced in their customs and usages than the provisions of this Code, and so they had no need for it at all.

There was also opposition to the Bill on the ground that it was inopportune; that the necessary preparation of ground had not been made; that the masses who would be affected by it did not know the contents of it sufficiently, and that therefore enforcement of the Code would be extremely difficult if not impossible. Finally even good social reformers believed that while it is perfectly justifiable under normal conditions even to force the pace in regard to necessary reform and go beyond what the uneducated masses might be prepared to do, it would be most imprudent to do so on the eve of our elections which for the first time in India would be on the basis of universal adult suffrage. If unscrupulous political opponents exploited the ignorance of the masses and brought to power a reactionary party the entire cause of social reform might suffer a setback.

Government's Consistent Attitude

Government however stuck to their ground firmly and till the end asserted that the Code was both necessary and opportune. Dr. Ambedkar showed himself adaptable, and agreed to many important amendments but on fundamental points he remained immovable. He said that the ultimate authority for the changes which he had incorporated in the Bill was the Constitution which guaranteed equality to all citizens. The marriage law as it existed at present among Hindus was, in his opinion unjust because it conceded polygamy to the man and imposed life long bondage to the woman. He denied that the guarantee of religious liberty im-

plied total non-interference by Government in the personal law of any community. He asserted emphatically that Govt. would abrogate any personal law if it was opposed to justice. Nothing would deter the State from ensuring to all its citizens social and economic justice along with political liberty. There is no doubt that the Government as a whole and the Prime Minister in particular shared Dr. Ambedkar's views and sincerely desired the passing of the Code. As the Prime Minister asserted on a subsequent occasion it was only lack of time that compelled them to give up the attempt for the present.

The Christian Position

Catholics generally cannot but be in sympathy with the Government's policy and admit their right to legislate on social matters in order to remove recognized abuses and defects. We can say without fear of contradiction that the reforms incorporated in the Bill are to a large extent due to Christian and Western influence. Nor is it correct to say that the attempt by Government to legislate on what seems to be a purely religious question and to define, for example, what precisely constitutes a *Dharmic* marriage is in the nature of an interference in religious matters, opposed to the Constitution and fraught with danger to all religions also. What Government claims to do here is to formulate and codify what is already accepted among Hindus or at least among large sections of them, because without such codification, the application of Hindu personal law becomes difficult. The recognition of personal law too is something not opposed to the secular nature of the Constitution. Hindus are governed by Hindu Law and Muslims by Muslim Law. In certain difficult cases affecting the Catholic Church, the Courts of India have applied the principles of Canon Law and decided cases in accordance with its prescriptions. The secularism of the Indian State does not mean a total ignoring of religion, but impartiality in dealing with different denominations. Hence even when

the objective of a uniform Civil Code is attained, we hope and desire that in certain matters provision will be made in the Code for the application of the personal law of the men affected, and the customs and traditions of the province. Therefore from almost every point of view, the principles and spirit underlying the Hindu Code should be acceptable to us.

On the other hand there are two or three aspects of the Code which call for reserve. Because of them, we do not greatly regret the postponement of the Bill. There is first of all the provision for Divorce among the castes that up to now do not permit it. Catholics cannot but look upon it as a blow to the sanctity of marriage, and the purity of family life. They therefore fully sympathize with their Hindu brethren who oppose this innovation. There is also the undoubted fact that very large sections of the country, including women, who are supposed to benefit particularly by the Code, believe that the public have not been sufficiently educated in regard to the implications of it, and that in the face of their apathy or opposition the enforcement of the Code might become very difficult. There is also the feeling that the legal definition of "Hindu" by which Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists are included in it, is too wide and does violence to the connotation of the term.

Finally, from the point of view of the Christians, there are certain provisions which place a convert to Christianity at a disadvantage and penalise his change of faith. Some of them deal with marriage, divorce and succession. The most disturbing of these clauses are those denying to the convert the guardianship of his minor children and the stipulation that all his children shall be brought up in the faith which was his before his conversion. We are convinced that these clauses go against the letter and spirit of the Constitution. We have hopes that, if and when these clauses come to be discussed in detail, the point of view of Christians will be considered and satisfaction given to them. The Christian community and their representatives will have to be alert

and not allow these provisions to go unchallenged when the Code is taken up again. If it is to be taken up after the elections, by the next Parliament, then the entire process of reintroducing the Bill and referring it to a Select Committee will have to be gone through. That will be the time when the abnoxious clauses should be eliminated, and the other modifications which the long discussions of this session have indicated, should be incorporated. The passing of a carefully drawn up and generally accepted Hindu Code will be an important milestone in India's painful journey to the goal of social justice.

J. D'Souza.

"Bal Vihar"

Bal Vihar owes its existence to an appeal launched by the United Nations Organisation for funds for the welfare of children. The Government of India took up the appeal and campaigns were started in all the States for collections.

In Bombay State a drive was made by a Committee of which Rani Maharaj Singh was President, and 75% of the amount collected was allotted to the city, and it was decided to utilize it for the opening of a Centre dedicated to the welfare of the child in the family.

Accordingly in March 1950 the Centre was started, and called Bal Vihar, meaning a recreation place or temple for children. The main objective of this Centre is the improvement in the lives of the under-privileged classes, by the reorganization of family life in all its varied aspects, viz., health, social, economic and environmental, thus creating for the child in the family, a healthier, happier and a fuller existence. Bal Vihar is therefore a Family Health Centre, its chief aim being the welfare of the child in the family, and the maintenance of optimum standards of health, and social well-being of the entire family. This is effected

through health and social overhauls, recreation and education. Stress is laid in this scheme, on the prevention of diseases, rather than their cure, and hence every family in this colony is taught how to improve and maintain their health and social condition, by taking advantage of the facilities provided for them at the Centre.

The physical and social check-ups of the individual members of each family, followed by the Family consultations, have revealed that diseases and social set-backs in the individual, have their origin in factors such as hereditary, familial, social, economic and environmental. Therefore the Centre caters for the physical and mental betterment of its members through the various activities available. In short this scheme is a research in the field of social medicine.

The area selected for the activities of the Centre is mainly an industrial one situated in the north of the city, and known as Worli. The population of Bal Vihar colony are housed in chawls, each consisting of 80 one-room tenements. There are 121 such chawls in Worli in charge of the Bombay Development Department, and a few of these, surrounding the Centre, house the members, who belong mainly to the scheduled castes. The men are mostly industrial workers. A few women about 10% work outside the home as mill-hands, vegetable vendors, ayahs, etc. A small percentage approx. 4% of boys of school age are workers in small flour mills in the area.

A population survey undertaken at the outset served as a means of obtaining an insight into the standard of living, economic condition, habits, housing, diets and physical condition of the people.

The total population is approximately 850 of which about 280 are children, the families numbering 96. The standard of living in 98% of the families is low. Although the income on the whole seemed satisfactory, despite this, 90% of the families were in debt. Due chiefly to the absence of any planned family budget and also to the system

of indiscriminate expenditure incurred on domestic events such as marriages, festivals, and entertainment of relatives and friends.

The habits of the people were found to be extremely insanitary, and their personal and environmental hygiene of a very low standard. Morals were observed to be lax, and instances of polygamy existed among them. The housing conditions appeared bad, the rooms being dark and ill-ventilated and mostly overcrowded, for it was observed that about 50% of the rooms had two or more families (averaging five to each family) occupying a single room 12 ft. by 15 ft. In some of these rooms in addition to human beings there were goats, cats, dogs and poultry. A noticeable feature was the attitude of absolute apathy and indifference displayed by the people to these conditions.

Enquiry into the diets showed that they were unbalanced, lacking in protective foods, low in caloric value and generally inadequate. The physical condition of the inmates appeared unsatisfactory, the men being malnourished and debilitated, the women anaemic, and the children malnourished, with chronic Rhinitis and skin affections. It was noticed that many of the infants were suffering from rickets.

Having made this preliminary survey, it was felt that if any improvement was to be effected in the population, and if the main objective of the Centre, *viz.*, the physical and mental well-being of the child was to be fulfilled, it should as far as possible be removed from the unhealthy atmosphere prevailing in the home, and provided with such amenities at the Centre, as would result in improving its physical, mental and environmental condition. With this in view the Centre has been divided into different sections according to the age of the child, and which aims at providing for its care from birth to adolescence.

The Creche.—For infants and toddlers upto the age of 2½ years—A Health Visitor and ayah are attached to this section. The children are brought in at 8 a.m. and after a

bath and change of clothing, are given a feed of milk, the toddlers getting in addition Rusks. This is followed by a dose of shark liver oil and calcium. Habit training, *re.* bowels is given, and they are then put into their cribs for their morning siesta. At noon they are given vegetable soup or fruit juice according to their age, and after this are put out on the verandah on mats. At 2-30 p.m. they have a feed of milk, the toddlers being given a cereal with their milk. They play until 4 p.m., when the mothers come and after changing them into their home clothes take them home.

It has already been mentioned that only a small percentage of mothers are workers within the household, yet in spite of this, their ignorance and lack of knowledge of mothercraft results in the infants being woefully neglected.

Hence in addition to caring for the infant in the Creches attention is given to the training of the mother in the rudiments of mothercraft at the Centre by talks and practical demonstrations.

The Nursery School.—This is the next section and deals with the child from 2½ to 6 years. A trained Montessori Teacher and an ayah are attached to this section. The children come in at 10 a.m. and are given a glass of milk followed by shark liver oil. They are then kept busy in the class until 12 noon, when they are served a meal, the menu is so arranged as to supplement what is lacking in the home diet, both as regards protective foods and calories. After this they have their afternoon sleep and at 3 p.m. a glass of milk. They are then taken out for out-door games and sent home at 4-30 p.m.

Handicrafts Classes.—This section is for the benefit of the school-going child, and is meant to provide it with such useful training, as will prove a source of income to it in later life. A handicrafts teacher and a carpentry teacher are attached to these classes.

On admission to any of these sections the children are subjected to a complete medical and social examination.

These examinations are repeated monthly in the case of the younger children, and periodically (every three months) in the school-agers. The findings are recorded in special forms prepared for this purpose, and in the Progress Registers maintained in each section.

The children attending the different sections are seen daily by the Medical Officer and any illness or infectious disease detected is immediately attended to, and the child directed for treatment and prevented from attending the Centre until it is cured.

Preventive inoculations against typhoid, small-pox, cholera, whooping cough, etc., are done when these diseases are epidemic in the city or endemic in the area. Frequent visits are paid by the Medical Officer, the Social Workers and the Health Visitor to the houses, with the object of stressing the importance of domestic and environmental hygiene, observing any family problems and finding out whether the advice given in the Centre is being carried out in the house. These visits it is fervently hoped will result in educating the parents to bring up their children in the correct way and help them in maintaining cleaner, healthier and happier homes.

Once a month a "parents' evening" is held at the Centre to which parents and children of the different sections are invited to attend. The entire staff are present at these "Evenings", information is given to the parents of the progress of their children, and any problems worrying them are discussed and remedies found for these. These evenings end up with a social, and every child and parent is given a chance to exhibit their talent.

Health and Social Education which is an extremely important part of the works is effected by frequent Health and Social Talks by the Medical Officer, the Social Worker and Health Visitor, both at the Centre and the homes. Lectures by eminent lecturers are arranged from time to time. Health films are exhibited at intervals, and excursions

whenever possible are arranged to places of interest in the city.

Mental and physical recreation for the school-going child is arranged for at the Centre by the provision of a Reading Room which is stocked with useful, instructive and interesting books, and equipment for indoor and out-door recreation and physical exercises.

This then is a resume of what Bal Vihar is attempting to do in a limited area and for a limited number of families. The short period of its existence, has been one of incessant endeavour to enlighten its members, and inculcate into them a keen health and civic sense, to broaden their outlook, and make them realize that there is a purpose in life, and that it is up to every individual, to so order and regulate their lives as to be an asset rather than a burden to the community and the State.

The scope of the work is vast and progress slow and up-hill, but with continued vigilance, it is felt that there are possibilities of improvement in the physical and social conditions of the inmates of this colony.

The conditions decribed for this area are, it is found from experience, prevalent in all slum areas in towns. It is therefore hoped that the "Bal Vihar" scheme will serve as a pilot scheme for starting similar ones in other under developed parts of urban areas, where the problems of poverty, apathy, ignorance, squalor and disease are existent. Such a scheme it is felt would prove a blessing to the families dwelling in these areas, giving them the opportunity to lead a healthier, happier and a more purposeful existence.

H. Machado



Planning with a Purpose

"Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and a higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies The state should leave to these smaller groups the settlement of business of minor importance. It will thus carry out with greater freedom, power and success the tasks belonging to it, because it alone can effectively accomplish these, directing, watching, stimulating and restraining, as circumstances suggest or necessity demands." (Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*.)

* * * * *

The publication of the First Five Year Plan by the Government of India has evoked a variety of reactions as diverse as the problems that affect this vast country. The most important and the most interesting section of the Report is to be found in Part I, which is entitled "The Approach to Planning." In the view of the critics this seems to be the most valuable part of the work. At the same time, it is the most pivotal, because so much of the success of the plan depends on what precisely the term 'planning' connotes to the mind of the planners. The point is that not everybody agrees as to what 'planning' stands for.

The recent spate of books and articles that discuss and criticise planning as understood and carried out in the U. K. today, makes one pause and ponder before plumping wholeheartedly for 'planning' of the type we are to become familiar with in this country. Obviously the authors of the Planning Commission are aware of the difficulties with which their path will be strewn and they seek to conciliate public opinion and expel the dark shadow of doubt in the

minds of those whom the plan will affect closely. That is why they take the trouble to write a whole introductory section on the meaning, the necessity, and the technique of planning, as they understand it from actual observation and experience.

"Planning," they begin, "is essentially a way of organising and utilizing resources to maximum advantage in terms of defined social ends." It therefore implies a method of determining a particular set of ends to be achieved and a definite set of means to attain those ends. Both ends and means have been determined by the Planning Commission in view of what they consider to be the best interests of the country. "For countries relatively underdeveloped, the problem is to promote rapid development and, at the same time, to see that the benefits of this developments accrue to all classes of the Community." Fortunately these purposes are at once vague enough and broad enough to carry with them a large measure of public agreement which as the Commission insists is one of the essential conditions for successful planning, for in a democratic environment public support and co-operation are the real sanctions behind the plan. Totalitarian methods of regimenting large sections of the people to ensure the success of the targets fixed by the plan are to be eschewed. But all the same the plan will require a conscious central directing executive if it is to be put into action.

In the present political set-up of this country, which is essentially a federal one, both the centre and states' governments will have their own parts to play in the general plan. There will also be close collaboration between the two governments on the subjects that fall within the concurrent list. This indeed will be one of the first hurdles that the Planning Executive will have to clear.

As the Commission proceeds to unfold the plan, their aims become clearer and more detailed, and the means are indicated. In the first place, they intend to rectify the dis-

equilibrium in the economy caused by the War and Partition. Secondly, they are determined to initiate the development of certain basic resources, so as to lay the foundation of a more rapid economic growth in future.

Within this broad framework, there are several competing objectives. The Commission has exercised its prerogative of choice and listed the priorities in order of preference. The plan must secure an increase in output of essential consumption goods. This will imply a high rate of investment, which can only be obtained by increased savings on the part of the community. The plan must also provide for fuller employment. The state must create conditions for full employment by a rapid extension of irrigation and more extensive agriculture. Cottage and small scale industries are to be encouraged. Cheap credit to the farmer is to be provided through credit co-operative societies.

As for industry, there will be two sectors, public and private. Nationalization of industry is not recommended. Even the ownership of state industries by government is not enforced. However state trading is considered imperative in order "to correct private trade and help regulate prices of commodities subject to wide fluctuations." The planners envisage suitable machinery for consultation and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

There is nothing novel or strikingly original in these objectives. They have always been the longed-wished-for ideals of healthy public opinion in the past. But the crux of the whole plan lies in the technique that is to be applied to achieve these ends. It is here that the struggle between coercion by the state and individual freedom begins.

The planners envisage state control over a large sector of the economy. The very nature of planning makes such control necessary. There will therefore be control of capital issues, control of new enterprises, control of the import and export trade, and control of prices. We know from experience what controls are and how inefficient they can be in a country like ours. The Commission senses the danger

to individual freedom but tries to palliate the bitterness of the pill with the casual remark that, "Democratic planning, like democracy itself, is an adventure, it has its risks and uncertainties. But must we too perforce take the plunge without heeding the lessons that experience is teaching the people of other countries where literacy is much higher and the public more responsive to the appeals of the state ?

A criticism of planning does not necessarily imply a defence of conservatism or a championing of 'laissez faire', it rather connotes an appeal to face the facts in all their stark reality. It is becoming evident that if planning is to succeed there is no intermediary path between failure of the plan, and the adoption of totalitarian methods to ensure success of the plan. "The modern planning movement sets out," says John Jewkes, "with good will and noble intentions, to control things and invariably ends up by controlling men." A democratic structure of society does not lend itself without great difficulty to planning. Either the plan has to be greatly modified during the course of its execution, or controls have to be extended to achieve the targets set down.

A patent example ready to hand is found in the Report of the Commission. Since the plan will take years to complete, the Commission rightly desires that prices be maintained at a stable level throughout the duration of the plan. The Commission therefore outlines a policy to check the level of prices from rising. Government will have to follow a disinflationary policy to balance state investments and disbursements on new projects. At the same time, control of exports and imports by Government will protect internal prices from the fluctuations that might result from foreign competition. For the same reason, the monetary policy of the Reserve Bank will be aimed at preventing speculation, and government fiscal policy will seek to direct a large flow of savings into the market, which is starving for capital resources.

What does this programme spell but wide governmental interference in so many walks of life that the private sector will inevitably be squeezed out of the picture to a greater or lesser extent as the government bureaucracy thinks fit. These consequences are inescapable however benevolent a government may strive to be. No plan can function without controls, and in order to be successful, overall control enters as an inherent necessity.

In seeking to control prices, every planner attempts to proceed independently of the price mechanism. This is a dangerous expedient, because in the absence of prices it is impossible to know whether the plan is really fostering the social good by increasing material welfare. The Commission lays down that "state investment is not governed by a profit and loss calculus. . . . wider social considerations have to be taken into account." This is all very well on paper, but in reality how are these wider social considerations going to be used as a test? Will the simple fact of increased production prove that social welfare has increased? In the U. K., production did increase, but there was a general outcry of shortage and rising prices, because the wrong things were being produced. The price mechanism cannot be dispensed with so easily as all that. Bottlenecks are a frequent occurrence in the planned economy of the United Kingdom; because over a vast economy that embraces millions of people and wherein the production of almost every article is intimately connected with the production of the rest, it is impossible for the planners to take the right type of decisions which are normally made by millions of consumers and producers. The mechanism of prices has still an important part to play in harmoniously balancing the economy of every country, and its wholesale debunking is fraught with a host of evil consequences.

The option to planning is certainly not the re-establishment of 'laissez faire' as Von Mises would have it. Government is only fulfilling its natural function when it sets down what it considers to be the most desirable ends it ought to

achieve with the help of its citizens for the common good. The levelling of incomes through fiscal policy, increasing agricultural produce by providing cheap credit, extending irrigation facilities, and educating the peasant, opening co-operatives, undertaking through public corporations industrial projects on a scale too large for individual entrepreneurs to carry out, — here lies the true role of the state. But if the state like some gigantic competitor enters the economic sphere that falls to the lot of private enterprise, then it will crush all its rivals, however free it may leave them to make their decisions. Ultimately in the long run, their decisions will be dependent on those of the state. The modern state is tending to become a social octopus of the worst type ever known in economic history. It excites the ambition of men who love power, and it lends itself to becoming a pliable instrument in their hands. The wielding of political and economic power, control over the lives and the fortunes of millions of men appears to be the great temptation of the 20th. Century.

The role of the state in the economic sphere is really to "guide, supervise, stimulate, restrain," individuals and groups of individuals in their various activities of earning an honest living for themselves. The state is to see that the common good is secured and not the good of an individual or a group of individuals. The state should not outstep the limits of its natural functions to invade those of the private sector in order to achieve what it deems to be necessary for the good of the community. This indeed is the short-cut to economic and political totalitarianism. On the other hand, the business of the state is to foster and achieve the wider distribution of property, and make possible greater production by appropriately helping the private sector. Planning is so far as it implies a conscious selection of particular social ends that must be achieved by the state in co-operation with citizens of good will is excellent and commendable. And what the individuals alone cannot do in the industrial or agricultural sectors, the state with its

enormous resources can more easily achieve. But even here, all these portions of the economic sphere that are financed and controlled by the state need not be transformed into state departments.

British experience suggests public corporations to replace government departments in the handling of the public sector in the economy. "A public corporation," says Lipson, "is an organ of the state that is not bureaucratic: it is moulded in the shape of an autonomous self-governing institution. It differs from a government department because it is managed not by civil servants but by nominees of the state, who enjoy independence within the terms of their charter. As a non-profit-making institution with no shareholders and serving the interests of the community, it fulfils the purpose of nationalization: as an autonomous body it is shielded from political influence, ministerial vacillation, Treasury control, and conventional procedure." These corporations are still in their infancy, but they have proved their worth to some extent. However the Socialist planned state of Britain is facing a crisis at present, and it remains to be seen whether the electors will allow it to continue in existence in the coming elections.

Let this point be clear: if planning is to give birth to the omnipotent state, then it certainly is a dangerous weapon in the hands of any government. The Five Year Plan does seem to give the executive very large powers of control over the field of private enterprise and to that extent will be responsible for the creation of a bureaucracy as powerful and power-loving as that of any other totalitarian state.

A. Fonseca



Catholic International Conference of Social Service

THE CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL SERVICE celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in Rome last September. On the eve of the celebration, the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, in a letter to the General Secretary praised the work done by the Conference. He congratulated all members of the organisation for their work spread over thirty countries covering the Continents of Europe, North and South America and Australia, and the Holy Father drew attention to the very effective technique employed by the Conference — a combination of professional competence and a deep loyalty to Christian principles of life. In fact, it is precisely these two characteristics of the CICSS which renders it a most useful modern instrument for restoring the individual to a place worthy of human dignity in society.

It is common knowledge that social service which means the rehabilitation of the needy individual, the blind, the cripple, the destitute child, is rooted in the Catholic tradition of Catholic charity. Pope Leo XIII stresses this, when in *Rerum Novarum*, he writes: "The Church intervenes directly on behalf of the poor, by setting on foot and maintaining many associations which she knows to be efficient for the relief of poverty... The Church arouses everywhere the heroism of charity, and has established congregations of religious and many other useful institutions for help and mercy, so that hardly any kind of suffering could exist which was not afforded relief."

Organised charity, while not doing away with direct alms-giving to the poor, is not new in the Catholic Church. St. Paul brought the alms of the church in Corinth to Jeru-

sale for the needy Christians. St. Cyprian emptied the treasures of his church for his neighbours in distress, and the firm conviction that the poor and the needy constitute the patrimony of Holy Church is preserved in the legend of St. Lawrence, who brought into the Court the crippled, the blind and the maimed, when ordered by the Roman Tribunal to bring out the treasures of the Roman Church.

In medieval Europe, endowments for the up-keep of the poor and the afflicted became the ordinary form of charity. Monasteries and special hospitals, usually under the care of religious congregations, were established to care for the blind, the infirm, the aged and destitute children. These institutions tended primarily at providing the ordinary necessities of life to the needy; but with the change in the social and economic conditions following the growth and spread of industrialism, the problem of helping the needy assumed new and wider proportions. Thus it soon became evident that there was need of a system of relief administration, or social service, which would discourage the able-bodied from taking to the ways of the mendicant, while receiving help over a period of distress or destitution. In other words, the problem was, "to meet the needs of the destitute for food, shelter, clothing and medical care, and yet not pauperize them."

This problem of "social rehabilitation"—as the object of social service now came to be known—began to receive careful attention towards the early part of the nineteenth century. Various religious organisations, philanthropic societies and in some countries the State Department of Public Assistance, contributed their efforts towards a solution. The solution sought implied helping the needy not only with materials resources, such as, food, shelter and clothing, but also psychologically and morally. Hence, modern social services have enlisted the help of different sciences, such as, medicine, psychology, philosophy, psychiatry and so on.

This wide interest, both on the part of the State and of private organisations, in social service today, has resulted in welfare organisations of the utmost diversity, seen, not only from country to country but even from city to city. There are the small private organisations, almost parochial in character, and which attend to the needy of the parish. These agencies raise funds locally, employ groups of devoted honorary social workers who visit the sick, manage small shelters for the poor and distribute material or financial help to families and individuals in distress. With the growth of the concept of society's responsibility to the individual and the spread of the idea of the Welfare State, social welfare work has been raised to a profession, under the control and direction of the State Government. In most countries, a large share of the Budget is devoted to social services; and in one country, as in England, the Social Security Acts tend to look after the individual from the "cradle to the grave." Equally competent and efficient are the many privately initiated, sponsored and operated non-governmental social service agencies established in many lands. In the past, these agencies operated their social services mainly by means of volunteers who gave of their free time, but in our own time, they employ both professional and voluntary workers. In fact, as social work grew, it became more and more evident that for certain jobs, full time work was essential backed by special knowledge and training. Indeed, it is not enough merely to feed and shelter the man in distress, one must know how to help him to become self-supporting and a useful member of society.

Given this need of the professional social worker, organised social work has led to the development of Schools of Social Service. In the USA, 49 Graduate Schools of Social Work were listed by the American Association of Schools of Social Work with 10,000 students, of which 4,026 were full time graduate students in 1949. Specifically Catholic schools of social service operate, today, in Belgium, Canada, France, Holland, Spain, and in both North and

South America. The courses offered by these schools, — both Catholic and non-Catholic — aim at training a body of social workers who help both to prevent “social failure,” and rehabilitate those who have failed. Thus, *social case-work* aims at building good and healthy families, by giving personal assistance and counsel to individuals and families. This course trains the social worker to help adjust individuals to their own home environment. *Child Welfare* covers the study of all the various difficulties, physical, emotional and moral encountered by children. The course, trains the social worker in the treatment of the child whose growth is blocked by physical, environmental, emotional or psychological difficulties or handicaps which reveal themselves in insecurity, fear, unhealthy thoughts, or inability to adjust itself to home or school. Other important courses treat of the rehabilitation of the mentally or physically disabled adult; the understanding of community life; the prevention of crime and the rehabilitation of the criminal into society. It is obvious that these courses differ in different Schools of Social Service, and practical field work is an important factor in the training of the professional social worker.

The importance of such training as given by Schools of Social Service, for the reconstruction of society can hardly be exaggerated. Indeed, Catholic social action following the lead of the Holy See, and of Pope Pius XI, in particular, has always insisted that true social reconstruction cannot be successfully effected unless, the attempt to rebuild the social and economic framework or structure is accompanied, at the same time, with an effort to rebuild and reconstruct man's moral behaviour and character. That is say, our economic planners, at most, can give us a blue print of the most perfect *structure* of society, but this structure alone will not make for social peace and happiness, which depends on men and women bringing to life that structure, by an activity in conformity with man's true human dignity. “It is found by practical experience,” writes Pope Leo XIII,

in his encyclical, *On Christian Democracy*, "that many a workman lives poorly and miserably, in spite of shorter hours and higher wages because of his character being bad and religion having no hold upon him. Without the instincts which Christian religion implants and keeps alive, without foresight, self-control, thrift, endurance and other natural qualities, you may try your hardest, but prosperity you cannot provide." That passage was written by Leo XII in 1901, but the truths of those words was illustrated the other month, when the author of this article, was told by an ardent trade unionist employed in one of India's heavy industries: "Our unions have fought and obtained higher wages for us workers, but no one attempts to teach the ordinary worker the first principles of thrift, nor how to use his money wisely, so that many of our homes are as poor, and our children as neglected as in the days when our wages were very low."

The Catholic effort to remedy this defect, is based, as Pope Pius XII tells us, in his letter to the General Secretary of the CICSS, on the double principle of expert knowledge and loyalty to the principles of Christian life. Our Catholic Schools of Social Service train our social service workers on this double principle, so that our professional and even voluntary workers may help the work of social rehabilitation in the most efficient manner. Hence, while the sciences of psychology, philosophy, criminology, psychiatry and socio-medicine equip the social service worker from the scientific side, his training necessarily includes the acquisition of a deep knowledge of the rights of man—to life, to freedom, to work, etc., — and of the social virtues of justice and charity. In fact, in terms of Catholic sociology the work of rehabilitation of the individual can only succeed when these rights are safeguarded, and when justice and charity prevail.

C. C. Clump



BOOK NOTES & REVIEWS

Among books on marriage problems, *The Rhesus Danger* by R. N. C. McCurdy, M. B., D. P., (London: Heinemann, 1950) deserves special notice.

"Year by year children have been born dead or have died, and others who have survived have been mentally defective, because their parents' blood would not mix." Such is the Rhesus danger. In England in 1947, 664 children died from this cause. And the author has lost two children from this disease. The effects of Rhesus incompatibility give rise to very serious problems: Should the parents practise contraception, be sterilized, procure an abortion, use artificial insemination, divorce?

Rhesus is a haemolytic disease involving a process of blood destruction. The first part of the book gives a technical description of the sickness in clear terms, of which details cannot be given here. In 1940 Rhesus monkey-blood was injected into rabbits and the rabbit serum mixed with human bloods. "It was found that this serum agglutinated the red blood-cells of the majority of people irrespective of their M, N, or A, B, O blood groups. This property was called Rh., the first two letters of the word Rhesus. "The presence of an agglutogen in the red blood-cells was called Rh.-positive and its absence Rh.-negative. "The theory was advanced, and it has only required slight modification since, that Rh.-negative people whose serum contains Rh. anti-body have been sensitised to Rh. either by previous transfusion with Rh. positive blood or, in women, by carrying a Rh. positive child during pregnancy." Blood transfusion and intramuscular blood injections may be very dangerous for the future child. "If an Rh.-negative woman has received even a single transfusion of Rh.-positive blood at any time in her life, it is 'more likely than not' that her children, if they are Rh.-positive, will suffer from haemolytic disease..." From the doubtful conclusions on p. 28 there seems to be insufficient evidence to conclude that the child's red blood-cells enter the mother's circulation,

during pregnancy. On account of moral implications it is very necessary not to make what is probable, certain. The case against abortions is strengthened by the remark that abortion, especially when induced, may sensitise a Rh.-negative woman. "If women knew that the artificial termination of pregnancy could cause the inability to bear a normal child the number of criminal abortions might be reduced."

Faced with the problem of having either still-born children or children with haemolytic disease, what are parents to do? A tentative answer is given in Pt. Two. The Author considers abstention impossible, the safe period is approved and praised but not accepted as a solution because it is not entirely reliable. Artificial contraception is proposed as an unsatisfactory but necessary way out. Sterilisation is termed a 'counsel of despair' since there is always the hope that medical science will find a cure and a solution to the problem. Until the English law as to when abortion is allowed is made clear, nothing definite can be said for abortion as a solution. The author is in favour of some legal relaxation on this point. Even adoption presents some serious problems since unlike other sterile couples "Each spouse in an Rhesus incompatible marriage could have children of their own; at times of difficulty each is likely to remember the fact." In Rh. incompatibility there can only be question of Artificial Insemination from a Donor (A. I. D.) and not of A. I. H. (from the husband). While there "is equally no doubt at all that most cases of A. I. D. have turned out happily" and that artificial insemination is one of the most satisfactory of all medical experiences, the author, with his usual fairness, quotes, "The fact that couples who avail themselves of this expediency are happy in the outcome proves no more than that, in our time, much of the religious significance of marriage has fallen away." And moreover, the great danger of a totalitarian state mis-using A. I. D. decides against this practice. The debate for and against divorce is left open. What of legal intervention? "One way of preventing the losses from haemolytic

disease would be to make blood-group examinations before marriage compulsory, and to prohibit marriages between Rh.-positive men and Rh.-negative women. But the danger of inadequate examinations, especially at the present stage, and of making such examination compulsory are serious. Such a prohibition in v. g. Great Britain "would mean that Rh.-negative women, that is one-sixth of all the women, would have only one sixth of all the men available to them as husbands. "This evidently gives rise to many grave moral problems. Of interest too is the opinion that it would be safe for children who are mentally defective as a result of haemolytic disease to marry and have children" as "there is very little likelihood — of any defect being passed on to their children."

Throughout Dr McCurdy has striven to be fair and objective, giving both sides of the question in most cases. He admits that "Decisions must be made, often on incomplete evidence, to provide a basis for everyday practice. It has been stressed that such decisions may have to be altered as further evidence becomes available." He considers that on most of the questions raised in Part Two there can be no final opinion. One cannot agree that artificial contraception, induced abortion, sterilization, A. I. D. and divorce are moot points and not to be condemned outright, and even the better sense of the author implies that he would like to condemn them himself were he only able to see his way clear.

All readers will surely feel very sympathetic to the writer who has lost two children and has himself to solve the problems he proposes. But surely this very real and great tragedy has coloured his views when he writes: "In considering the effects of Rh. incompatibility, one is struck by the apparent purposelessness of the phenomena... More than one person has remarked to the writer that their belief in God has been shaken by their knowledge of these effects." Time and time again science has declared the purposelessness of some phenomena or other only to retract its 'dogma' some years later. The writer has shown an open mind on so many other problems; it would have been wiser, though

assuredly very difficult for a scientist with a personal problem, to have suspended judgement on this point too and to have trusted in God who never does anything without a purpose.

A. N.



On Wedlock

Love is born of God. It would be a betrayal of trust to allow the aureola to be torn from this thing of God's. The vilest deeds of the world, the degradation into which it has been drawn by the spirit of impurity, even original sin itself, can do nothing to change the essential nature of things. Love comes from God. For God in His reverential love for man, has had such paternal confidence in him as to trust him and depend on him for the preservation of the human race, and for this purpose has instilled into man's nature in creating it, an instinct almost as powerful as the instinct of self-preservation, almost identified with man's self. That instinct is married love. It plays a part greater than all others in the drama of life. For while our other natural activities can only produce things, it alone is destined to produce persons. From it God expects those who will become His children by adoption.

In no other activity is the cooperation of God so closely concerned as here. The act of human procreation implies not only the co-operation of God as every act implies it, but it requires, so to speak, His creative cooperation. The reason is that the human being, which is the result of this act, cannot exist without a human soul, and this soul God alone can create...

Love then is, of itself and by its nature, a sacred thing, an element of natural religion. Even at this stage of our argument we can thus partly see the reason why it was fitting that in revealed religion marriage should be a sacrament. *Amor ex Deo est*..... Love is born of God. It is therefore one of the things that are God's. To sin against it is to sin against God, and to sin against Him where, in the natural order, He is most intimately present to us.

E. Marsch in *Love, Marriage and Chastity*.

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ORDER

AIMS AND OBJECTS

- (1) To spread the social teachings of the Catholic Church.
- (2) To provide theoretical and practical training for social workers.
- (3) To serve as a centre of information about Catholic social works.

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